



Refresh Your Style

Brenda Lewis, 52, a wife and mom of two, works out of her home as a contractor and can wear what she wants. That's the problem. She ends up working in jeans and chunky sweaters. "I would like to find outfits that are comfortable," she said, "and if I need to run out, I do not need to change my clothes!!"



Before: No one's looking

Brenda tends to dress to hide her tummy, but that makes her pick chunky sweaters like this one. It obscures her waist and petite frame (she's an inch over 5 feet) and well-proportioned body. The jeans, in a lighter wash and saggy in the hips, scream "Mom jeans!" The sneakers look a bit elderly.



She cleans up nicely

A woman cannot live in jeans alone, so Brenda got a semi-formal look, too. A tiered little black dress with lace bodice, Carole Little, \$30, shows off her curves. Black tights (her own) and black suede wedges, Kate Spade, \$99, lengthen the look of her legs. A distinctive necklace made of faux pearls and a fascinatingly stretchy mesh fabric, \$125, by Raleigh artist Karen Mason, makes a statement. A convertible clutch, Gian Bernini, \$24, finishes the look.

What did she think?

Brenda bought the casual look and might go back for the dress. "It was fun! I told my hubby and mom what I was doing and they were excited. My sons only said there was too much makeup." A glamorous mom apparently takes time to get used to.



Hair and makeup

Brenda has great skin and a wonderfully thick head of hair, and both got a bit of polish. An updated bob frames her face nicely and adds volume that balances her features, while an all-over glaze brought out the silvery shine in her strands. Eyeshadows in grays bring attention to her eyes, while foundation, blush and lipstick add color to her face.

Jeans ready to be seen

Here's a jeans-and-sweater outfit casual enough to wear at home, but polished enough for when Brenda goes into the office. The jeans, Jones New York Signature Petite, \$25, can anchor a dressy or casual outfit, and the petite sizing is right for her frame. The printed, cowlneck blouse, Willi Smith, \$15, adds great, cool colors. The jeweled shoulders on the sweater, Mosca, \$20, take it up a notch. Brenda loves a good heel, and the side-zip booties, Franco Sarto, \$40, add a stylish touch. The shoulder bag, Emilie M., \$17 and scarf, Ninto, \$40, finish the look.

Styled and written by Sheon Ladson

Photos by Juli Leonard

Clothing from T.J. Maxx, 4600 Durham-Chapel Hill Blvd., Durham

Necklace by Raleigh jewelry artist Karen Mason, The Collectors Gallery Artists, 443 Fayetteville St., Raleigh

Hair color by Laurie Linney, haircut by Misty Cayton and makeup by Chelsey Carelas, student/stylists at Emerald Academy, 8551 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh

If you need a style reboot, send e-mail to sheon.ladson@newsobserver.com to be considered for a makeover.

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2010 FILMS

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movie that was more entertaining and thrilling than many big-budget blockbusters and went to darker and more moving places than most of the prestige pics looking for Oscar consideration. Even when Pixar is in sequel mode, it comes out with a movie that will restore your faith in movies.

"The Social Network" Sure, we can discuss how "the Facebook movie" turned out to be a precise time capsule of our tech-crazy culture. We can break down how the movie took the story of the online-networking giant's origins and turned it into a study of people's desire to be known in this world. But when it comes down to it, the main reason this is on the list is that it's simply a fine piece of visceral filmmaking. Who knew the unlikely pairing of David Fincher and Aaron Sorkin would make the year's best director-screenwriter team?

"True Grit" and "Winter's Bone" I certainly never

thought the most impressive performances I'd see this year would come from two young actresses starring in a couple of Westerns. Joel and Ethan Coen's sharp-tongued, off-beat-to-the-core revisionist redo of the Charles Portis novel (and iconic John Wayne film) was fun across the board. It featured an assured turn from newcomer Hailee Steinfeld as a stubborn teen looking to avenge her father's death. Jennifer Lawrence also gave a fascinating performance as a stubborn teen, finding out the hard way that blood is not thicker than water as she looks for her missing father in "Bone," Debra Granik's nasty neo-noir set in the Ozarks.

"Mother" Korean director Bong Joon-ho has to be the wildest genre filmmaker to show up since Tarantino. He's not as globally renowned but fortunately, he's more human. That's certainly established in this whacked-out, ultimately affecting whodunit in which a doting Korean mom (Kim Hye-ja) is determined to find out who is responsible for the murder of a young girl, a murder for which

she feels her mentally peculiar son (Won Bin) is being wrongly imprisoned.

"Carlos" Olivier Assayas' five-and-a-half-hour biopic of '70s rock-star terrorist Carlos the Jackal (played by Edgar Ramirez) didn't even play in the Triangle. It did hit theaters and film festivals in other markets, as well as the Sundance Channel and IFC on Demand. It's worth checking out, mostly to see how Assayas (who directed my favorite film of 2009, "Summer Hours") gives a meticulously to-the-point chronicle of Me Decade-era terrorism. It's an engrossing study of one man's addiction to notoriety, the "Raging Bull" of terrorist epics.

"Exit Through the Gift Shop" In a year in which some documentaries appeared to traffic in fraudulence more than truth ("I'm Still Here," anyone?), outlaw artist Banksy (allegedly) made a documentary in which fraudulence becomes part of the theme. By chronicling the rise of wannabe artist and Banksy hanger-on Mister Brainwash, this movie dissects a number of

things about art: its true essence, who or what defines it and the hype that comes when it is recognized in the media. For a film that has you wondering if this is all a big put-on, "Exit" has more depth than any doc this year.

"Shutter Island" With all due respect to Christopher Nolan and what he did with the flawed-but-mind-scrambling "Inception," this was the most watchable movie that featured Leonardo DiCaprio falling down a rabbit hole of alternate reality to escape the ever-haunting memory of his dead wife. Martin Scorsese obviously had a grand ol' time adapting Dennis Lehane's novel and making a polished psycho-noir in which, even when you saw the twists coming, it was a pleasure watching them unfold.

"Black Swan" and "The Fighter" Critics and academics will be dissecting Darren Aronofsky's nutty-as-an-elephant's-lunch art-house thriller - featuring a go-for-broke Natalie Portman as a quietly unraveling ballerina - for years to come. But some at-

tention should also be paid to David O. Russell's unorthodox, uncouth boxing biopic. With Mark Wahlberg as a working-class palooka with a boorish family (Christian Bale and Melissa Leo take gonzo supporting turns as his brother and mother), "Fighter" is both a rousing, inspirational sports movie and a funny parody of one.

"Everyone Else" and "Blue Valentine" In "Else" (which didn't come out in the Triangle but is now on DVD), writer/director Maren Ade creates a quiet-but-revealing world in which a young German couple (Birgit Minichmayr and Lars Eidinger) can't even enjoy a sunny, Mediterranean vacation without silently questioning each other's motives. As for the rough, Cassavetes-esque "Valentine" (which will drop in January), co-writer/director Derek Cianfrance catches both the lovely courtship and not-so-lovely marriage of a young, American couple (Ryan Gosling and Michelle Williams). These films are two not-that-different takes on disintegrating rela-

tionships. But while one ends ambiguously, another just crushes all signs of hope.

"The American" I'm throwing this in simply to annoy the people who were upset after watching it. Director Anton Corbijn and star George Clooney basically pulled a fast one on American audiences, luring them into theaters with the promise of an action-filled espionage thriller. Instead, they got a tense, existential, '70s-style mood piece. While people couldn't stop complaining about how different it was, I actually enjoyed it for that reason.

Hopefully this year more filmmakers and stars will feel they don't have to rope-a-dope audiences to get them to watch their risk-taking films.

I hope some audiences will stop being so narrow-minded and take a chance once in a while.

And I certainly hope that when these movies appear, they won't show up in the last month of the year!

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